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## FINE FURNITURE AT THE COLUMBIAN EXPOSITION.

BY HESTER M. POOLE.



DESIROUS as I have been of discovering something original in furniture at the Columbian Exposition, I must confess to something of a disappointment. There are a number of rooms furnished in excellent taste, and showing great harmony, both in coloring and outline. The different historical periods are well represented. The visitor is shown a multitude of samples of Louis XIV., XV. and XVI. There are rococo rooms and Holbein rooms, the medieval and the renaissance. But a close copying of those periods is discernible. There are few samples of independence in outline.

### ENGLISH EXHIBIT.

In the English exhibit we find the firm of Collinson & Locke, London, has an elegant armoire with a huge central mirror and side drawers, the whole being nearly twelve feet wide by eight in height. The mahogany of which it is constructed is inlaid with satin wood, in figures of the renaissance period.

There is also a large satin wood dressing table of the severe style of the Restoration, which seems delightful to look at after studying the various periods of the Louis's and the rococo effects so much in vogue. The ample wash stand, which accompanies it, six or eight feet across, also of satin wood, has a marble slab upon the top, and two rows of cream and brown shaded tiles at the back and below the narrow top shelf. The toilet ware, huge enough for the lavatory of giants, is of cream color and richly edged with gilt. There is a double service throughout. Beautiful in color and purity of form, this unpretentious room will suit those whose tastes incline to richness of material and simplicity of form.

After wandering around the furniture exhibits, I returned day after day to the space occupied by Messrs. Macbeth & Roberts, of Sheffield, England. Their old carved medieval oak is unlike anything else on exhibition. Already a number of persons, notably Mrs. J. F. Hurst, of Washington, D. C., have secured several pieces for delivery after the close of the Fair.

For a library or a large, well lighted hall, I can imagine nothing finer than these stately and suggestive carvings. Here is a settee seven foot long and towering high above the head of the sitter. On it, in relief, are carved Amazons battling with Greek warriors, long animated festive processions, sufficiently archaic to lead the mind back to more primitive and picturesque ages, busts of Mercury and Vulcan with the motto "Be True, Be Just," and the coat of mail of John Milton, mingled delightfully with mythological subjects. It has a large boxed and cushioned seat and small lockers under the arms. This is the companion of the one figuring in the illustration.

There are also sideboards with all sorts of noble carvings, some ten or twelve feet high, a clock that would entice one to forget the hours in studying its beauty, a high backed chair with pictures of William and Mary and groups of the battle of Boyne, a screen on which Baron D'Arcy and Ladye blazon their motto of "Do Ye Justice With All," with those fine medieval figures in which the eye finds more rest than all the gilding in the world. On one piece, a settee, are two mottoes, in old English script.

Several of the pieces are old English furniture restored; others are copies of old specimens, while many are original both in design and construction, but whose style and decoration are made to match other pieces in the same collection, of the Elizabethan and Stuart eras.

Another convenient and ornamental arrangement deserves notice. The English firm of Wingfield & Co. show a brass bedstead with a shallow alcove in the headpiece, behind which falls a curtain of fulled silk. In front of the alcove, which is flush with the remainder of the headpiece, is a narrow rail of brass. The alcove itself is most useful as a receptacle for a handkerchief, a book, a bottle of Florida water or a night taper. One of these bedsteads has a single central alcove of this kind, another has one over each pillow.

Peyton & Peyton, of London, furnish perhaps the most unique bedstead in the entire exposition, unless it be that costly solid silver bedstead from the Shah of Persia, in the Midway Plaisance, which the materialistic mind is happy to estimate at the exact cost of \$35,000. This handsome article of the Peyton's is designed with due regard to the patriotism of the American.

In the highly ornamental head piece is enameled a shield of the United States, and surmounting the top stands an eagle with extended wings. A reproduction on a smaller scale is seen upon the foot-board, while an eagle perches upon each of the four posts. This seems loud and showy to read about, but the construction is in such excellent taste that one cannot so regard it after seeing the article. Any person wishing to repose under this shadow of the ægis of his country can do so at the expense of \$1,250.

To return to the British section, H. R. H. Victoria of Wales has sent for exhibition a large stool, the woodwork of which is carved in a diaper pattern by Her Royal Highness' shapely hand. The tan colored leather with which it is covered is outlined and raised from underneath in patterns of the jonquil, leaves and blossoms. The Princess Maud of Wales has a stool, precisely similar, save that there is a sunflower pattern upon the leather. Both these stools are large and high.

In the same British section one sees a large handsome writing desk. It is made of rosewood, inlaid with stained and shaded satin wood, showing a noble specimen of woman's



HALL CLOCK, TWO HANGING WHATNOTS, AND PAIR OF CHAIRS, IN MEDIEVAL CARVED OAK. EXHIBITED BY MESSRS. MACBETH & ROBERTS, SHEFFIELD, ENGLAND.



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handicraft. It is in birds and scrolls, a kind of Louis Seize affair. Beside it is a linen chest, four feet by two, in which griffins and scrolls are stained and inlaid, the background showing a peculiar mottled appearance. There is also a fine screen of chrysanthemums on a shaded green canvas, with a frame of white enamel.

Near by is a long panel of wood that may be used as a shelf or mantel, beautifully carved in figures of Pan, and the graces and nymphs. These latter are ivory colored, while the background is stained a deep dull brown.

Again, a quaint two-fold screen in a gold frame is simply a painted clown and a rustic lad, each on a panel, demure and mirth-provoking enough. There is a background of white and a border of the renaissance period.

Among the corner tables in this section is one with a heart-shaped top, wrought with vines and leaves; others finished with wheels of many kinds, curious old long, archaic clocks,

respectively by the Czar of Russia, the King of Bavaria and the famous collector Sir Richard Wallace of England.

It is not on account of the appreciation of these persons that attention is called to this fine piece of furniture. It is because it fits all the requirements of richness, elegance and tastefulness.

On a ground of mahogany are inlaid woods of various kinds and colors, all soft and harmonious. On the rolling top are thus represented three medallions, consisting of musical and astronomical instruments and draperies. At each corner are seated female forms, more than a foot in length, beautifully modelled and gilded, holding candelabra, that, in turn, are as finely finished as the most delicate pieces of jewelry. In the center of the back is an enamelled and double-faced clock in a highly ornamental and carved frame, finished in gold. In the ends are Sevres medallions surrounded by choice inlaid woods. Neither description nor gravure can give a suitable



LARGE SETTLE IN MEDIEVAL CARVED OAK. EXHIBITED BY MACBETH AND ROBERTS.

and various other articles. All these are the handiwork of women.

### FRENCH EXHIBIT.

From Great Britain it is not a long leap to the land of the versatile and artistic Frenchman. Only just before my last visit to the "White City," there arose before my beauty-loving eyes a sight of an exhibit altogether remarkable. It was then being put in order, and had only begun to attract the attention it deserves.

This furniture, from the atelier of A. Beurdelay, Paris, has an agency presided over by Jules L. Graux, 510 Fifth avenue, New York, which is also the depot of G. Cuel (artistic furniture and decoration), at the same number. Every article is a marvel of artistic beauty and delicate workmanship. First of all is a reproduction of the desk made by Reisener for Louis XV. But three replicas beside this exist, which are, or were owned

impression of the extreme refinement and beauty of this incomparable piece of workmanship.

Beurdeley also shows a notable replica of a work table, copied from one used by Marie Antoinette. The top is finished in lacquer and gold. The drawers are diamond inlays of satin, olive and lemon woods, exquisitely arranged. There is also a cabinet of sycamore and amaranth, with marquetry finish, and a fine replica of a bookcase in ebony and gold, the original of which held the literature read by the unfortunate Empress Eugenie. Here is found a notable desk of stripes of olive and lemon wood, arranged in horizontal lines across the top and sides.

Our friends, the French, opened their displays of "Meubles" in the latter days of May. Among them are those notable examples of taste and workmanship that we are always led to expect from those artists of the tool, as well as the brush. They are graceful, riant, sparkling, with delicate outlines and curves

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and finished with much gilding. The wood is seldom shown in its native coloring. The upholstery is likewise gay and parti-colored, whether it be of brocade, tapestry, or of embroidery upon silk or satin.

Perhaps as characteristic and beautiful as well as regally rich as any on exhibition of this style of furnishing are the rooms of Alvoine & Co., of Paris, an illustration of which is herewith given. The suite consists of an anti-chamber, grand salon, little salon and bed-chamber.

The latter recalls the happy days of Queen Marie Antoinette, before the revolution. The head of the bed is surrounded by a shallow alcove, hung with sky blue watered silk. This is striped with satin and brocaded with flowers, all in the self-same tint, and hung sufficiently scant to show the figures of the material. The bedstead itself, finely carved, is gilded, but the head board and foot board are covered with blue silk, exquisitely embroidered with flowers in their natural colors.

The walls are hung with yellow and white brocade. At the foot of the bed are two low chairs, shaped like elongated stools, each with a low back, which is continued across one end. These chairs are covered with yellow embroidered silk. A cabinet near the bed head, is interiorly finished with blue plush, while its exterior is flush with the wall and finished in such manner as to disguise the door. The furnishings and toilet stands are imitation of old marble, which, it would seem, are rather of a solecism. It is claimed that the bed and its coverings are precisely copied from that of the unfortunate queen. The spread is a lovely Irish point.

The grand salon opening into the bedroom just described is fairly ablaze with gilding. The period represented is that of Louis XIV. There are marvelous furniture coverings of brilliant embroidery on a cream ground, with wall hangings to match. Old gold, green and winy red appear in all these furnishings. The most curious article seen here is a low long couch, sufficiently large to hold but one person. The high back, shaped like the back of a shoe, and a similar toe-shaped piece at the foot, are made of bamboo, heavily gilded. The seat alone is handsomely upholstered. In this settee a person sits with extended limbs, finding entrance and exit at the sides, where the foot and head pieces taper away. This is a convenient form of sofa couch for an invalid or an elderly person who is desirous of habitually taking his ease *en evidence*, and this piece of furniture might easily be copied by our skillful manufacturers.

The high, cool, sloping head rest, with its supply of pillows, gives support and permits freedom of motion, while the couch may be readily wheeled into any position to secure light or freedom from draughts. I look after the Fair to see American adaptations of this exceedingly convenient and graceful arrangement.

The French house of Maxime Clair show chairs and tables in cane and fancy woods, with inlays of various forms and designs. These are especially suitable for villas and summer cottages, though some of the embroidered and inlaid table tops are suitable for winter rooms.

A French screen in the Woman's Building, in a carved frame of crimson plush, is extremely effective. On a white background are painted in sepia French rural scenery, foliage and running brooks, all finely finished.

Belgium shows elegantly carved furniture in conventionalized styles. F. Rosel & Co., Brussels, display a distinguishably fine suite in Italian walnut (*noyer*). The scrolls and wreaths with which this set is surmounted are gilded. Large and delightful oil paintings on the wood, oval in form, of cherubs dispelling slumber, are the chief finish. No machine work is found in the Belgium exhibit.

## UNITED STATES EXHIBIT.

At the present writing the furniture display of the United States is extremely incomplete. The Rockford Co., Illinois, show a hall and stairway remarkable for their finely symmetrical proportions and graceful simplicity. Their promise of a handsome exhibit thus seems likely to be fulfilled.

S. Klahen & Co., of New York, have a fine exhibit of Mexican onyx and bronze. There are onyx tables and pedestals, lamp standards and fire-place fittings. They also display what is said to be the finest piece extant of the famous green Galway marble (Ireland), for which a noted New York gentle-

man has paid a fabulous sum, though it still remains on exhibition.

Among other curios is a Columbian souvenir table, finished in ivory and gold. Within the border of the top is a half-tone copper plate etching of the principal buildings of the Exposition.

This would be an incomplete outline of noteworthy furniture, did I not mention the carvings from the schools of Messrs. Pitman & Frye, found in the Cincinnati rooms of the Woman's Building. The decorations are pleasing, and they, with the



TRIPLE TIER CABINET "FERRAND," REPRESENTING CYCLOPS AND VULCAN AND CASTOR AND POLLUX. EXHIBITED BY MACBETH AND ROBERTS.



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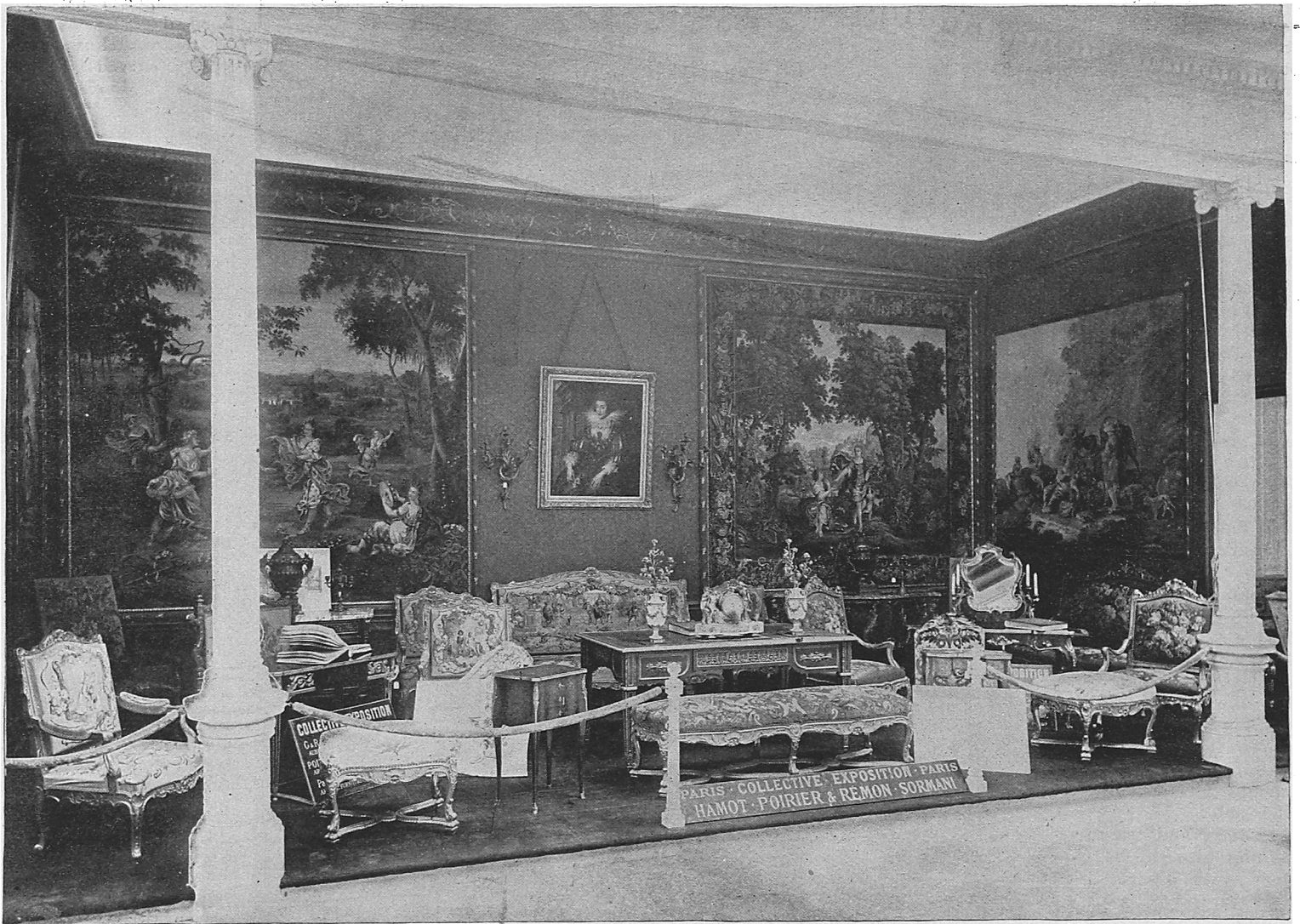
carvings, are the workmanship of the women of Cincinnati. The case of the upright piano is from the tools of Mrs. Murphy, Mrs. Cunningham and Mrs. Fry. The front is entirely covered with reliefs of the sumach leafage, and is divided into three panels. The ends have each a bird, in high relief. Under the keyboard are wheels within wheels, foliations and scrolls.

There is also a standing cabinet, *motif*, the oak leaf and the sunflower, in high relief, all exquisitely carved out of mahogany by Mrs. Pitman. There are a standing cabinet of dog wood blossoms and sunflowers, a quaint chest where a dragoon extends himself into oak boughs, by Mrs. Van Vechten, and an elegant sideboard, by Mrs. Louise K. Murphy, copied from the antique; and a table by Mrs. William Dodd. Here are bird's nests and rushes and bands of butterflies and roses. Other carved articles, too numerous to mention, by Miss Peachy and Van Vechten, are a delight to the visitor.

not yet open to the public, we find half a dozen St. Petersburg firms show excellent pieces of furniture. There are also hand carvings in choice native woods, which vie with those sent from Switzerland.

## EMBROIDERY NOTES.

THE subject of church embroidery is one in which doubtless many of our readers are interested. Some excellently worked specimens have been lately made, which reflect very great credit upon the artistic quality of the handiwork of the ladies who executed them. Alms bags made of white satin sheeting, both plain and brocaded, are simple in form, and edged with gold cord. One is elaborately embroidered with the "I. H. S." in green silk and gold thread, and another more elaborate, displays a well covered conventionalized design of



COLLECTIVE EXHIBIT OF MESSRS HAMOT, POIRIER & REMON, AND SORMANI, OF PARIS, AT THE COLUMBIAN EXHIBITION.

In the Woman's Building, the library of which was fitted up by Mrs. Candace Wheeler, by order of the women of New York, we find two fine old carved wood sofas, contributions from private owners, covered with wash leather, and a set of chairs designed by Mrs. Wheeler herself. The frames are shapely, strong and severely simple, satisfying all the canons of Eastlake. The coverings of solid deep dull watergreen, harmonize with the other fitments of this charming hued room. The only ornamentation is an embroidery in dull gold upon one side of the back near the top. This consists of a statuesque woman, with full face fronting the spectator, holding in her right hand an architecturally shaped casket, which it takes little imagination to convert into a similitude of the building itself. It is rather a suggestion than a copy, and as such is extremely original and decorative.

In the Russian department, which at the present writing is

wild roses, bordered with autumnal tinted leaves. Another has a white brocaded ground, covered with scroll work in mousse and gold shades, and a violet one has red linings, having the cup in the centre surrounded by leaves and flowers.

IN stoles there is the same perfection of needle work. One is in white brocaded silk, lined with light green, and edged with shaded fringe of green, red and gold tones which appear in the elaborate embroidery at the ends, emphasized throughout by gold threads; while another is of deep rich red silk, lined with figured blue, displaying the familiar passion flower.

CHOICE of three routes to St. Louis by the New York Central; four trains daily.